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8 March 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of Special Group Meeting, 8 March 1962

**PRESENT: General Taylor, Mr. Johnson; Mr. Gilpatrick and
General Lemnitzer; Mr. McCombs**

1. The Special Group conducted a closed discussion of the Mongoose Minutes of February 26 and March 5.



3. Italy - Political Program

Mr. Alexis Johnson mentioned that State does not have a firm position as yet due to the fact that there have been some new developments. State would like to get Ambassador Reinhardt back and discuss the program in the light of this new information. (This matter was subsequently mentioned to higher authority.)

4. Support to Political Parties

Mr. McCombs had a paper on the activities in question, which had not been distributed due to its sensitivity. Mr. Johnson will meet with Mr. McCombs and go over the list also and report back to the Group if there seem to be any doubtful items.

5. British Guiana

Mr. Johnson informed the Group that Secretary Rusk wants action deferred on this matter until he has an opportunity to discuss it further with Lord Howe. Mr. Johnson undertook to recommend to the

NSC review(s) completed.

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Secretary that he press Lord Home to agree to a joint U.S.-British examination of alternatives to the present situation. Mr. Johnson distributed an INR assessment of the opposition parties in British Guiana, for study by the Group members. It was agreed that this subject would be deferred until the Rusk-Home conversations took place. (This matter was subsequently mentioned to higher authority)

25X1 6. Elections

Mr. McCone introduced the subject by reminding the Group that they had previously indicated interest in this overall project and had asked for a specific program. The CIA paper outlined the complete program in considerable detail, but Mr. McCone emphasized they only wished approval on Phase I, up to July 1, at a cost of 25X1
(This matter has been mentioned to higher authority.)

7. Laos - Mao Relocation

Mr. McCone elaborated on the paper, which had been previously distributed, reminding the Group that this subject had been discussed before, that the U.S. had a definite moral obligation to the Meos who would probably undergo considerable persecution if the Lao Government structure should change; on the other hand, underlining that the contingency might not arise. General Taylor pointed out that the plan as written seemed to lean very strongly in the direction of Sayaboury Province and Northern Thailand and suggested there be some more study of the possibilities in South Laos. It was decided that Mr. Johnson would undertake to discuss this problem with Ambassador Young and Bas FitzGerald. Meanwhile, Mr. McCone would study the Southern Laos alternatives further. It was agreed the problem would be discussed again next week.

8. National Reconnaissance Office

Mr. Gilpatric gave an oral briefing on this matter. He reminded the Group that the October 1961 agreement had been overtaken by events. Defense plans to work up a detailed paper on which Mr. McNamara and Mr. McCone would agree, and then seek approval of higher authority. Mr. McCone added that some specific details were still not agreed by the two agencies.

9. London Daily Mirror Article

General Taylor raised the matter of the London Daily Mirror article on U.S. satellite reconnaissance activities. Mr. McCone commented that his people had analyzed this as either being a

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speculative article, or possibly a Soviet plant. Mr. Gilpatric said that an Air Force field activity had made a press release on a recent Discoverer operation which threw in some additional unnecessary statistics. It is possible that disciplinary action will be taken as a result. Mr. Johnson surmised that the increasing awareness of our satellite reconnaissance operations might run us into stormy weather with the Soviets or other governments and wondered if there was some way we could establish the legitimacy of the operations. (This matter was subsequently referred to higher authority.)

10. Reconnaissance

Colonel Steakley and Major Moran explained the military requirement. As a result of an analysis of the North Vietnam reconnaissance and the high level of new activity discovered, it is felt there is an urgent requirement for South China information. Colonel Steakley outlined a typical route in South China and noted that the defenses were ineffective. The Group approved the operation subject to minor modification in route as felt necessary. [redacted] rather than a return to home base was noted as possibly being acceptable. It was also mentioned that an approved North Vietnam operation is waiting for suitable weather and could cover Hainan on its withdrawal route. Mr. Johnson commented that he saw no great objection to a [redacted] on his return flight. This change in plan was approved. On TACKLE, it was noted that while three routes have been approved in principle, only two have been specifically authorized. The third will be considered by the Group in the light of analysis of results of the first two.

Mr. Johnson requested that the be given a memorandum describing the activity picked up in the North Vietnam coverage, which he could give to Secretary Rusk for his use in talking to Mr. Gromyko on Sunday. This should not only summarize the activity discovered but should evaluate it against a previous base point. General Taylor also requested that he be given a summary of significant North Vietnam information picked up in more detail, as soon as practicable.

Julian J. Ewell
Colonel, U. S. Army

Distribution

Mr. Johnson
Mr. Gilpatric
Mr. McCone
General Taylor